

# Lake Mead

## Environmental Education

National Recreation Area  
National Park Service



## Grade 4 - Field Program

### *"Hiking through History"*

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Theme</b>                          | The U.S. Government Railroad Trail represents several events that are significant to Southern Nevada history.   |
| <b>Objectives</b>                     | <p>Students will describe why the Hoover Dam and the U.S. Government Railroad were built. Students will describe living conditions for people who came to the area seeking employment.</p> <p>Students will begin to understand what the National Park Service is doing to preserve cultural resources within Lake Mead National Recreation Area.</p>   |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>                     | <p><u>cultural resource</u> - any physical evidence of historic events</p> <p><u>historic</u> - an event that was important in the past or will be seen as important in the future</p> <p><u>history</u> - the study of past events relating to the life or development of a people or country</p> <p><u>reservoir</u> - a natural or artificial holding area for storing a large amount of water</p>   |
| <b>Background Information</b>         | <p>Many events shaped the Southern Nevada that we live in today, but few rival the changes brought about by the completion of the Hoover Dam in 1935. It all began with an idea to "tame the mighty Colorado River" and could not have been possible without the U.S. Government Railroad. This railroad was significant among Nevada railroads because it was government built and owned. It was built solely to serve the construction of the Hoover Dam and then later used for maintenance and repair of the dam. Use of the railroad began in September 1931 and continued until 1961 after the last generator unit was installed at the dam. The tracks were dismantled and sold for scrap.</p> <p>On September 30, 1935, President Roosevelt dedicated the dam and on October 26, 1936 the first electric generator went into operation. It took close to five years for the Colorado River to fill the reservoir that we now know as Lake Mead. In October 1964 Congress designated Lake Mead and Lake Mohave (south of the Hoover Dam) as the country's first National Recreation Area managed by the National Park Service.</p> |
| <b>Before the Field Trip Activity</b> | Have your students create a journal in preparation for their trip to Lake Mead NRA. Journals provide a means of recording observations in the field and can be accessed at a later date for comparison studies. Please be sure that the students bring their journals on the day of the field trip.   |
| <b>After the Field Trip Activity</b>  | Have the students imagine they lived during the time decisions were being made about the Hoover Dam project. Would they choose to build it or do they have other ideas for alternative solutions?   |